

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

A GUIDE TO BIRD FINDING WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI. By Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. Oxford University Press, 1953: $4\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{8}$ in., xxiv + 709 pp., 36 pen-and-ink sketches by George Miksch Sutton. \$6.00.

The Pettingill guides to bird finding are earning a place alongside the Peterson guides to identification as indispensable equipment for the field student in the United States. This volume covers the states west of the Mississippi River (including Minnesota and Louisiana), picking up where the Eastern guide, issued in 1951, left off.

It is truly an ornithological geography of the Western states. Although, first of all, it provides a directory of places to see birds in the wild, it provides also much other information of regional interest—about zoos, museums, bird clubs, and available literature.

This guide is intended primarily to help people traveling to an unfamiliar part of the country, but it is much more than a mere directory. All readers will find useful facts in it, particularly in the introductory portion of the chapter on each state, where there is a discussion of the climate, topography, and plants as they affect the bird life of the region. This information about the Western states is not gathered into any other work to my knowledge. For this alone, the guide will earn a place on many library shelves. There are other items of information that could not easily be found elsewhere. Such an item is that about a 20-acre patch of virgin prairie, never plowed or grazed, near Cherokee, Iowa.

In this work there are many evidences of thoughtful consideration for the problems of the traveler. Localities are discussed under the name of the nearest city or village listed in the Rand McNally road map of the state. Highway directions are given in detail, down to the last unmarked lane. Other suggestions cover overnight accommodations, special clothing needed, and tips on the pronunciation of difficult Spanish and Indian names.

This work is a notable achievement of cooperative effort. It could not have been written from the experience nor even from the reading of one man alone. It is a compendium of the knowledge, much of it previously unpublished, of more than 300 cooperators who are intimately acquainted with their own areas.—HAROLD F. MAYFIELD.

A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF BRITAIN AND EUROPE. By Roger Tory Peterson, Guy Mountfort and P. A. D. Hollom. Wm. Collins Sons and Company, London; and Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1954: $4\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ in., xxxiv + 318 pp., illustrated by Roger Peterson with 40 color plates, 24 half-tone black-and-white plates, 32 line drawings in the text and 2 end-papers; 368 line distribution maps by P. A. D. Hollom. At time of writing, Swedish, Dutch, German, and Swiss (in French) editions also available. Price of U.S. edition, \$5.00.

This new book confines within the tiny space of some 26 cubic inches the most important published contribution to the advance of European field ornithology since field ornithology assumed its position as a science (and art) in its own right. Mountfort (Secretary of the British Ornithologists' Union) has contributed the main part of the text, Hollom (an editor of *British Birds* and editor of Witherby's *Popular Handbook of British Birds*) the material on geographical distribution and maps, and Peterson the plates and planning, as well as an important part of the text. All three authors have, as this reviewer has witnessed, worked together in a tight collaboration involving ruthless cross-criticism; and the result is nearly perfect.